WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Airstrips in Rajasthan

†*684. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the places in Rajasthan where new airstrips are proposed to be constructed alongwith the cost of each of these airstrips and the present status of the one proposed to be constructed at Ajmer;

(b) whether Government propose to construct an airstrip at Sawai Madhopur, a major tourist spot in Rajasthan which is also famous for Ranthambor Tiger project and whether Government are aware that it will boost tourist industry of the country; and

(c) by when, international flights will be introduced from Jaipur, one of the major airports of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN) : (a) and (b) Airports Authority of India on request from the State Government has identified a site for construction of an airport at Ajmer. The proposal is at a preliminary stage and it is too early to assess the cost at this stage. At present, there is no proposal for construction of an airstrip at Sawai Madhopur.

(c) Indian Airlines has already commenced daily international service on Jaipur-Delhi-Dubai Sector and *vice-versa* from 12th February 2002.

Coffee production

*685. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of annual coffee production and consumption in the country during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that supply of coffee has outstripped the demand in the country resulting in a loss of remunerative prices for the coffee growers;

(c) if so, the details in this regard;

(d) whether coffee growers in the country have demanded relief measures from the Central Government for tiding over the crisis faced by them; and

(e) if so, the details in this regard and Government's reaction thereto?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) The details of annual coffee production and consumption in the country during the last three years are given below:

Year	Production (in MT)	Consumption (in MT)
1999-2000	2,92,000	55,000
2000-01	3.01.200	58,000
2001-02(Estimated)	3,00,600	60,000

(b) and (c) Coffee is a globally traded and export-oriented commodity and its prices are influenced by the New York Exchange and London Exchange for Arabica and Robusta respectively. In the recent times the global coffee production has outstripped the consumption leading to mismatch between demand and supply which has resulted in a steep fall in international coffee prices and the price fall has affected all coffee producing countries including India. Since 80% of coffee produced in the country is exported, the industry is mainly dependent on the global coffee prices. As such, Indian coffee growers are not getting the same prices today which they were getting 2-3 years ago. However, the domestic prices of coffee are still higher than the international prices.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. Various coffee growers organisations/associations have been submitting representations to the Government of India raising several demands such as some relief package from the banking sector, waiver of loans/ interests, fixation of minimum support price for coffee, allocation of funds for increasing domestic consumption of coffee etc.

In order to provide relief to coffee growers, the Government of India, besides operating several plan schemes under which various types of financial and technical assistance are provided to the growers, have in the recent past, taken a series of steps for the benefit of the coffee sector, such as reschedulement of loans of 2000-01 taken by coffee growers from commercial banks; implementation of an interest relief scheme, which provided 5% interest relief to targeted small coffee growers on working capital loans availed by them from the banks. The Coffee Board has also implemented a scheme under which financial assistance @ Rs. 500 per tonne has been provided to Indian Coffee exporters for reducing their handling costs.

Recently, once again at the request of Government of India, the Reserve Bank of India has announced a relief package for the coffee growers under which all types of coffee loans, (short, medium and long terms including rephased/rescheduled loans) extended by Banks, which are outstanding as on 30th June, 2002 and not classified as Non Performing Assets, will be consolidated into a Special Coffee Term Loan (SCTL) with a repayment schedule ranging between 7-9 years and initial repayment holiday (moratorium) of two years, subject to certain conditions and review thereafter.

Coffee Board is also implementing a medium-term export strategy to sustain and gain market share in the key markets and also to improve the competitiveness of Indian Coffee in the global markets over the next few years.

Debts of highly indebted poor countries

*686. SHRI ABANI ROY:
SHRI H. K. JAVARE GOWDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have announced their decision to write-off the debt owned to it by the highly indebted poor countries;

(b) if so, the names of the highly indebted poor countries in the World to whom India has provided loans;

(c) the Quantum of debt owned by those countries and under what terms and conditions such loans were given; and

(d) the advantage to Government for writing off such debts?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) to (d) In response to the HIPC initiative started by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to reduce the debt of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) to sustainable levels, Government of India's decision to provide relief in respect of the bilateral debt owned to it by the HIPCs was announced by the Finance Minister in his statement at the International Monetary and Financial Committee meeting held on April 20, 2002. Government of India is now examining the modalities of providing debt relief to these countries.